process in Sri Lanka and the efforts being made by the Government of Sri Lanka for its resumption. Bilateral cooperation in various sectors was discussed by the Ministers in the areas of trade and comprehensive economic partnership, defence, power, ferry services between the two countries and exchanges between parliamentarians. Regional and global issues of mutual interest were also discussed. The two governments continue to be in touch with regard to the progress made on the issues discussed.

Minimum export price for coir products

*158. SHRI A. VIJAYARAGHAVAN:
SHRI K. CHANDRAN PILLAI:

Will the Minister of AGRO AND RURAL INDUSTRIES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Coir Board has withdrawn the Minimum Export Price (MEP) for coir products;

(b) if so, whether Government have evaluated the adverse impact of this decision on the small scale coir manufacturing sector alogwith the details thereof;

(c) whether Government propose to reintroduce the MEP and Purchase Price Export Scheme; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF AGRO AND RURAL INDUSTRIES (SHRI MAHABIR PRASAD): (a) Yes, Sir. The MEP has been withdrawn by the Ministry of Textiles (nodal Ministry) with effect from 9th Arpil, 2002 on the recommendation of this Ministry. As the Minimum Export Price on Coir and Coir Products stood withdrawn, the Purchase Price Enforcement (Scheme) had lost its relevance and was, therefore, withdrawn.

(b) No, Sir. The Government have not conducted any evaluation in this regard. However, after the removal of MEP, there has been an overall increase in exports, both in terms of value and in terms of quantity.

(c) and (d) The decision to abolish Minimum Export Price (MEP) was taken in the larger interest of the coir industry after due consideration of various issues involved. There is no proposal under consideration of the Government to either reintroduce Minimum Export Price on coir and coir products or the Purchase Price Enforcement Scheme.